(ii) establishment or development of a new airport in lieu of the airport referred to in clause (i); or

(iii) investment in the equity in respect of shares to be subscribed by the Authority in companies engaged in establishing, owing, developing, operating or maintaining a private airport in lieu of the airport referred to in clause (i) or advancement of loans to such companies or other persons engaged in such activities.

The Act does not envisage direct funding to State Government.

Direct air services between Ahmedabad and Moscow

1172. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to start direct flights from Ahmedabad to Moscow;

(b) if so, by when it is going to be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Both the National Carriers e.g. Air India and Indian Airlines have no plans start direct flights from Ahmedabad to Moscow. However, Ahmedabad is connected to Moscow thrice weekly through code-share flights from Mumbai operated in association with Aeroflot.

Improvement of airports in Himachal Pradesh

†1173. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: SHRI ANAND SHARMA: SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: '

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that millions of foreign tourists come to Himachal Pradesh every year to see tourist places like Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Chamba, Kangraand Kinnaur etc;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that due to the landing of small aeroplanes

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

on those airports the fares are comparatively high as a result of the tourism being affected;

(c) whether there is any scheme regarding the extension of runway and improvement of airports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. A large number of foreign tourists come to Himachal Pradesh every year to see various tourist places.

(b) At present the airport at Shimla, Kullu Manali and Kangra are capable of handling smaller type of aircraft and no scheduled operator is operating air transport services to/from these stations. Further, the Government does not regulate the air fares and the operators are free to determine the same in accordance with their commercial judgement and market forces.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Runway at Kangra airport has already been extended from 3900 ft to 4500 ft. The runway at Kullu Manali airport can only be extended beyond 3700 ft. after required additional land is made available by the State Government. Due to location of Shimla airport on the table top of a hill surrounded by deep gorges on all sides, runway extension beyond 4100 ft. is not possible.

Scrap disposal policy of Al

1174. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the scrap disposal policy of Air India as regards aircraft items;

(b) whether it is a fact that the lack of timely raising of scrap notes by the concerned departments for timely disposal of aircraft items results in further deterioration of the obtainable value of scrapped items;

(c) the details of aircraft items pending for disposal due to non-issuance of scrap notes; and

(d) what is Air India's policy and the plan of action to bring greater accountability in stemming the losses of Air India on this count?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) As and when the Engineering Shops scrap a "